

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 15, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Re: California Raisin Industry Purchase Request

Dear Secretary Perdue:

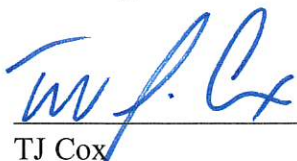
The California Raisin Industry faces an urgent situation: an extreme surplus threatens the livelihoods of raisin farmers and handlers who can't market their way out of the problem. As a result, we seek your support and ask that the U.S. Department of Agriculture make a purchase of 38,000 tons of California produced raisins over the next year.

Raisin farmers and handlers both face challenges on several fronts. Farmers are struggling to secure adequate labor supply at an affordable wage, to access water to irrigate their fields, and to overcome the burdens of heavy regulation. Handlers, on the other hand, must manage this surplus in a market already saturated by imports. U.S. raisin imports increased by 164% this past year and displaced California raisin sales in the process. At the same time, uncertainty over trade has made selling in foreign markets more difficult: California's raisin exports fell by 40% in 2018 as buyers like Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany and China all scaled back their purchases.

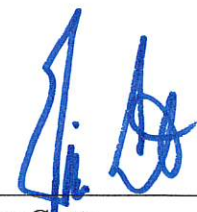
We urge you, without reservation, to support the California raisin industry's request to purchase 38,000 tons of raisins for distribution to schools and a wide range of feeding programs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



TJ Cox
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress